

RATEABILITY OF NURSERYMEN'S GREENHOUSES, &c.

At Berkhamstead, on the 2nd inst. Messrs. Lane, nurserymen, holding land in that parish partly covered with glass or greenhouses, appealed against a rate.

The parish officers, in making the last rate, affixed an additional value to these premises of 50*l.* alleged to be for the assessment of "tenants' rights" or "lights," against which Messrs. Lane instituted this appeal. Apart from the trade question of the assessment of a nurseryman's stock to the relief of the poor, in no other instance throughout the parish, it was stated, had the fixtures and fittings of trade—boilers, vats, tallow melters, copper, steam engines, nor plant of any description—been made amenable to the rate; therefore, on this ground, Messrs. Lane felt themselves aggrieved, and gave notice of their appeal against the rate, not so much as an invidious attack upon themselves, as that in this respect the rate was "or fair, unjust, and unequal."

From their surveyor's report, it appeared that heretofore Messrs. Lane had been assessed to the parish in the rateable value of 61*l.* per annum, exclusive of the now additional charge of 50*l.* for "tenants' rights," or "lights," sought to be charged. The surveyor's opinion was, that the rateable value of Messrs. Lane's occupation as the integral holding was only 40*l.* per annum.

It was contended on their part, that, even if greenhouses were declared to be rateable, they could only be assessed for the nominal value which they conferred upon the soil, and ought in law never to be separately assessed, since such an occupation could not properly be divided from the land itself; or, even if so, possession could never be enjoyed without trespass on the land adjacent. The *ex arto quæstio* was whether greenhouses or stock in trade could be brought into assessment? and, if assessable, not being separate but combined holding, alleged to confer value upon land, can they be assessed otherwise than as land improved thereby? In which latter case these deductions allowed by 6 & 7 Wm. 4, c. 96, from the annual value, being the cost of maintenance, repair, and reinstatement necessary to be performed to command such value, such would nearly consume the sum of the actual value from year to year, and leave the rateable value of hot or greenhouses a merely nominal impost.

The Court ultimately decided that the 50*l.* charge for "tenants' rights" or "lights" could not be sustained; that the respondent parish should bear the costs of the appeal; and that the premises should be referred to two surveyors to determine the future value of Messrs. Lane's occupation, exclusive of "tenants' rights," and the expenses of such survey were to be borne by the parish.

Notices of Books.

The Cause, Cure, and Prevention of Smoky Chimneys. By C. W. HARTNETT. London: James Wiltshire, 53, Grosvenor-row, Pimlico, pp. 34.

THIS is a pamphlet by one who himself undertakes the conversion of inveterate smokers; and who has reined in his thoughts, and given his attention to the more proximate causes, rather than wander away, at the risk of losing himself, amongst those more out of reach; probably abrewedly judging that even these would still end in smoke. Some suggestions will be found in it, to servants and others, as to the influence of a well-made or an ill-made fire on the draught in a chimney; how to give the first start at lighting, &c. In the following extracts, we allow the writer to speak for himself:—

"Every attempt to cure an inveterate smoky chimney must be fruitless if care has not been taken to remove thence, at the outset, all the old damp soot, which may be easily distinguished as such from the soot of a non-smoky chimney, by the power which any person can have of grasping a handful of the former, while it is utterly impossible to do that the hand upon a single thumbful of the latter, supposing one of each to have been recently swept, and this experiment tried just then. The inefficiency of the chimney sweepers' machines as at present made, the use of which is enforced by Act of Parliament, has caused more smoky chimneys than all other casualties put together; a fact which must have rendered itself evident to everybody who may have taken the trouble of observing the increase, yearly, by thousands, of tallboys, malt-house crows, &c. to the tops of chimneys of houses which, though built for many years, had never required them before."

"As heat is artificially obtained for common purposes by the combustion of coals, it is desirable, for the remedying of smoky chimneys, that the sort of coal which ignites most readily, and yields least smoke, should be selected as fuel; and of this sort is the Cannel coal; because the ease and celerity with which it gives off its combustible matter speedily admits of flame, which immediately removes the confined, incubent atmosphere, and opens, as it were, a channel, into and through which the smoke finds its course, and passes outwards, unobstructed, from the chimney."

But fuel generally may be usefully considered with regard to its compactness or weight, its quantity of combustible matter, and its quantity of water: in regard to the first of these considerations, the more compact and heavy fuel is, the more difficult it is to kindle, but the more permanent the fire when once ignited; and as to the second consideration, the less ashes the less smoke, and vice versa; the greater the proof of the superior combustible qualities of coals; and as to the third, the less water there is in coals the better for domestic uses.—For two reasons, one of which being the vapour or damp repelled by the heat, and driven into the room, and the other, the damp mixing with the smoke, and causing it, in greater quantity, to deposit in the chimney and become soot. It therefore follows, that a mixture, consisting of two parts of Newcastle coals and one of the Cannel, is the best adapted for general use, as well as being peculiarly well suited for chimneys disposed to be puffy."

So the writer makes out the Anti-climbing-Boys Act to have given a great impulse to the cowl trade: certainly at the present day the *chenoux-de-frises* with which the sky-line of our metropolitan buildings is serrated speaks volumes for the indefatigability of the zinc workers: take Wilton-crescent for an example, and it would really appear as if taste must have had more to do in the matter than necessity. The deficiencies of the sweeping machine he makes up for by attaching to it a bundle of chair-cane's stiffest inside cane-cuttings, folded up uncut, and about 2 feet square, which rakes out the soot that is otherwise left undisturbed by the machine. Of the difficulties of the subject he relates some "modern instances,"—one, that of a mansion erected by a London builder ten or twelve years ago in Richmond-park, the flues of which proved so incorrigible that it had to be razed to the ground and rebuilt on another foundation! Truly a "smoky chimney" is a great evil, and enough to create the "acolding wife" coupled with it in the adage. Those who would prevent it must go farther than the pamphlet before us.

Kelly's Practical Builder's Price Book. Thomas Kelly, Paternoster-row.

KELLY'S Price Book, besides being "a Guide to the Valuation of all Kinds of Artificers' Work," is founded on a principle which renders it almost perpetual: the price of labour having for a lengthened period remained unchanged, is looked on as a fixed charge; the variation is in the cost of the material; and on the rise or fall of this in the market the lists are formed, rules being given to enable the surveyor to make such alterations as may from time to time be necessary. It contains a very useful and lucid treatise on the measurement of builders' work generally, an abstract of the Metropolitan Buildings Act, and much information valuable as well to the Trade as their employer; the whole of which is rendered more intelligible by the addition of some engraved illustrations. In six words, it is a very useful book.

The Book of the Garden. By CHARLES MCINTOSH. Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London. Part I.

THE author proposes to exhibit in this work all that is known on the subject of gardening, and to give as well plans for conservatories, green-houses, &c. as instructions for the formation and arrangement of gardens. The first division of the work will be architectural and ornamental; the second practical. If carried out well, and the execution of the first part justifies the belief that this will be the case, it will supply a great desideratum. The laying out of flower-gardens, with reference both to form and colour (the harmony and contrast of plants), should have attention.

Mr. McIntosh has had charge, during the last twenty-eight years, first of the gardens at Claremont, and latterly of those of the Duke of Buccleuch, which gives assurance of his practical knowledge. In writing on his own art he is not likely to utter such nonsense as he does when (speaking of the Great Exhibition Building) he says the design of it will hand down the name of its architect, Sir Joseph Paxton, to the latest posterity, in association "with those of Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren."

The questions of wide or narrow copings for fruit walls, aspect, beat colour, and construction of such walls, briefly treated of in the part before us, are matters which ought not to be overlooked by architects. The work will be fully illustrated by engravings.

On the Amendment of the Law and Practice of Letters Patent for Inventions. By THOMAS WEBSTER, Esq. M.A. F.R.S. Barnster-at-Law. Second edition. Chapman and Hall, Piccadilly. 1852.

THE author of "The Law and Practice of Patents," and of "Reports of Cases" on them, is admittedly one of the best-informed writers on this important subject with a view to its essential reform; and although differing with him on some points, we can freely recommend his ideas as well worthy the attention of our legislators, especially at this present moment.

Nearly 700 inventors, many, or indeed most of them very poor inventors, revealed their cherished secrets to the public at large, in the Great Exhibition, under the temporary protection of the Act passed for that special purpose, and with the assured hope of permanent success, at less impracticable cost than before, under the general Act so auspiciously launched in the Lords, but mangled (by mere haste and mistake we do believe, though instigated by other motives) in the Commons, at a period of the session too late for re-amendment. Even then, and till very lately, the hope of these poor inventors was sustained by the general assurance that the proposed Act must pass—that it would be the law of the land before their brief twelvemonth of grace expired. Recent political events, however, have rendered the risk of a speedy dissolution of Parliament but too imminent. It is most earnestly to be hoped, therefore, that amongst those pressing measures which must be passed before that dissolution take place, the proposed reform of the patent law will hold a prominent and an early place. We agree with Sir William Cubitt in believing that no one Act will perfectly reform that law, but as for the Act in question, it has already been discussed, and most of it already agreed to by both Houses; and, if again brought in, the attention of the Commons might be limited almost altogether to the main "amendment," which they were hastily induced to make on it as it stood when passed by the Lords.

The working of the Exhibition Act, if we may so call it, has, it appears, been most instructive, and has led to the belief that provisional protection, as a permanent preliminary to the issue of patents, would be a great good, and would form the basis of "a Museum of Inventions," and an "Inventors' Mart," where the subjects of patents in embryo might be exhibited, tested, scrutinized, rejected or accepted, and purchased or promoted, by the free intercourse of capitalist and inventor, all the while that their merits were *sub judice*, till patented, or not, as the case might be, the patent covering the period of scrutiny and exhibition.

The opinion of the little treatise under notice is in favour of the establishment of such a provisional institution.

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

—At a meeting on Wednesday it was agreed to borrow 10,000*l.* to pay the contractors in part. It appears that the court has liabilities to the extent of 20,674*l.* odd unprovided for. They are allowed by the amended Act to collect but one rate, and that only a 3*d.* one, in the year. This Act will expire within six months.